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Letter dated 14 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

During the general debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly held on 23-29 September, Gambia, Tuvalu and a very few other countries once again raised the so-called issue of "Taiwan's participation in the United Nations specialized agencies" in their statements. Their remarks constitute a violation of the one-China principle and interference in China's internal affairs, and are thus firmly opposed by the Chinese Government and people. Any move intended to clamour for "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" runs counter to the improvement and development of cross-Strait relations. I now wish to state the following positions:

1. There is only one China in the world. The one-China principle is widely recognized by the United Nations and the vast majority of its Member States. The Chinese Government's adherence to the one-China principle will never change. For historical and other reasons, the mainland and the Taiwan region are not yet reunited, but the fact that the two sides belong to one and the same China has never changed. China is the shared homeland of the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and the 23 million Taiwan compatriots are important components of the Chinese nation. This fact has also never changed.

2. General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), adopted in 1971, resolved the issue of China's representation in the United Nations once and for all, politically, legally and in terms of procedures. The United Nations specialized agencies have also resolved the issue of China's representation in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 2758 (XXVI). The United Nations and its specialized agencies are intergovernmental organizations composed only of sovereign States. This is clearly stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and the constitutions and statutes of United Nations specialized agencies. The so-called "principle of universality" is also based on sovereign States. Taiwan is a part of China. The claim by a very few countries that the Taiwan region should be allowed to "participate" in the United Nations specialized agencies is based on a misinterpretation of the "principle of universality".

3. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the well-being of the 23 million Taiwan compatriots and understands their aspiration for and feelings

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about participating in international activities. We have always been committed to improving cross-Strait relations, promoting exchanges and cooperation between the two sides, and safeguarding the lawful rights and interests of the Taiwan compatriots overseas. The Chinese Government has never opposed commercial and cultural exchanges and cooperation between the Taiwan region and other parts of the world. In 2005, on the basis of the one-China principle, the Chinese Government reached agreement with the secretariat of the World Health Organization (WHO) on a Memorandum of Understanding, which provided facilitation to medical experts from the Taiwan region for their participation in WHO technical conferences and activities. The Chinese Government has also adopted a fully flexible and constructive attitude towards Taiwan's participation in the multilateral activities of such organizations as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, cross-Strait relations have shown a good momentum of improvement and development. We will firmly adhere to the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and continue to enhance our exchanges and cooperation. We will open up a new vista for peaceful development of cross-Strait relations to benefit the people on both sides of the Strait and bring peace to the Taiwan Strait region.

People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait share the same blood and destiny. Taiwan compatriots' participation in international activities is an internal affair of the Chinese people and should thus be resolved through consultation among the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait. We hope and firmly believe that, so long as the two sides work together and create conditions in a spirit of "building mutual trust, putting aside differences, seeking common ground and striving for a win-win result", we will surely be able find an appropriate solution through consultation.

4. The Chinese Government hopes that the very few countries involved will desist from doing things that undermine China's interests and hurt the Chinese people's feelings. We are convinced that the United Nations and its Member States will continue to adhere to the one-China principle, and render understanding and support to the Chinese Government in its efforts to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity and promote cross-Strait relations.

I have the honour to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under item 109 of its agenda.

(*Signed*) **Zhang** Yesui
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the People's Republic of China to the United Nations